

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CONAKR 01565 041507Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 1565

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT : PROPOSED POLICY OPTION FOR USG REGARDING PAIGC
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

1. AS THE U.S. MISSION IN CLOSEST PHYSICAL PROXIMITY TO THE PAIGC AND THEIR AREA OF OPERATIONS IN GUINEA BISSAU, THIS EMBASSY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON THE PAIGC DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

2. WHILE IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT THE PAIGC DOES NOT CONTROL MOST OF THE TERRITORY (THE PLACE WHERE THE INDEPENDENCE CEREMONIES WERE REPORTEDLY HELD IS ONLY 10 KM INSIDE GUINEA BISSAU FROM THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA BORDER) NOR THE MASS OF THE POPULATION OF GUINEA BISSAU AND THEREFORE DOES NOT FULFILL OUR OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AS THE GOVERNMENT OF A NEWLY-INDEPENDENT STATE, THERE IS ANOTHER OPTION OPEN TO US BESIDES CONTINUING AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. THE PAIGC DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE CALLS ATTENTION TO THE STATE OF INSURGENCY IN GUINEA BISSAU, WHICH RAISES THE POSSIBILITY FOR THE U.S. TO RECOGNIZE THIS OBJECTIVE SITUATION AS WELL AS THE EXISTANCE OF A "LIMITED INTERNATIONAL PERSONALITY" FOR THE INSURGENTS (LAUTERPACHT RECOGNITION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, AS QUOTED IN WHITEMAN VOL. 2, P. 487).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CONAKR 01565 041507Z

3. SUCH RECOGNITION WOULD PROVIDE A FURTHER MEANS OF BRINGING

PRESSURE ON PORTUGAL TO NEGOTIATE WITH HER COLONIES FOR INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE IF THE ACT OF RECOGNITION IS INTERPRETED BY US AS A FIRST OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE EVENTUAL POSSIBLE RPT POSSIBLE SUCCESS OF THE MOVEMENT. AS THE LEGAL RIGHTS THAT WOULD FOLLOW SUCH RECOGNITION SEEM TO BE FLEXIBLE (WHITEMAN'S DIGEST VOL. 2, P. 488) OUR INTERPRETATION OF THEM COULD BE ADAPTED TO REFLECT OUR INTERESTS AS THE SITUATION IN GUINEA BISSAU AND ELSEWHERE DEVELOPS. SUCH RECOGNITION WOULD HAVE THE FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE COURSE OF ACTION WE HAVE BEEN URGING ON THE AFRICANS AND OTHERS AT THE UN, I.E., IT WOULD BE A REALISTIC ACTION REFLECTING AN OBJECTIVE SITUATION. IT WOULD GIVE SUBSTANCE TO OUR POLICY OF FAVORING SELF-DETERMINATION AND RESTORE SOME SENSE OF BALANCE TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS OVERWHELMED WITH THE ATTENTIONS OF CUBA, THE USSR AND THE REST OF THE COMMUNIST CLAUQUE. SUCH RECOGNITION WOULD ALSO CONFORM TO THE NATIONAL IDENTITY WE HAVE CREATED FOR OURSELVES FROM OUR HISTORY AND OUR SENSE OF PURPOSE IN THE WORLD. THOSE LEADERS AND NATIONS WHO WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH A CLOSER POLITICAL IDENTITY WITH US BUT ARE INHIBITED FROM DOING SO BECAUSE OF OUR ATTITUDE ON THE QUESTION OF THE PORTUGUESE COLONIES MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SO ON THE BASIS OF THIS CHANGE IN OUR POLICY.

4. IN SEEKING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION AGAINST TERRORISM WE HAVE DRAWN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND TERRORISTS. WE HAVE ALREADY SOUGHT TO RECOGNIZE AND CONFER LEGAL EXEMPTION FROM SANCTIONS ON THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS. GRANTING A SIMILAR EXEMPTION TO ONE OF THEIR MOVEMENTS SHOULD PUT US IN A STRONGER POSITION TO PUSH ACTION AGAINST TERRORISM.

5. GRANTING RECOGNITION OF INSURGENCY ON OUR PART WOULD NOT NECESSARILY OPEN DOORS PREVIOUSLY CLOSED TO US, IT SHOULD NEVERTHELESS PUT THIRD WORLD LEADERS IN A MORE POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND WHEN WE COME TO ASK SUPPORT FOR ISSUES WE FEEL ARE IMPORTANT TO US BUT WHICH DO NOT ALWAYS FIRE THEM WITH THE SAME ENTHUSIASM AS THE ISSUE OF INDEPENDENCE.

6. OBVIOUSLY, THE MAIN DISADVANTAGE OF SUCH RECOGNITION IS THE RISK WE RUN OF A REACTION FROM PORTUGAL THAT WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS HARM TO OUR OTHER, POSSIBLY GREATER, NATIONAL INTERESTS.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CONAKR 01565 041507Z

FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF CONAKRY WE ARE UNABLE TO ASSESS WHETHER THIS RISK WOULD BE WORTH THE POTENTIAL GAINS FROM RECOGNITION OF INSURGENCY. OTHER DISADVANTAGES, SUCH AS THE NATURE OF THE PRECEDENT WE WOULD BE CREATING ARE LESS CONVINCING. IN EVERY INSURGENCY OR BELLIGERENCY AS IN EVERY LAW CASE THERE ARE ENOUGH VARIABLES TO JUSTIFY ANY DISTINCTIONS WE WOULD CARE TO EMPHASIZE.

7. OTHER POSSIBLY UNFAVORABLE POLITICAL FACTORS THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED IN DECIDING WHETHER TO RECOGNIZE INSURGENCY IS WHETHER THE PAIGC IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SOVIETS, THE CUBANS OR THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA. THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON ALL THREE, CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION FOR SUPPLIES AND TRAINING AND SEKOU TOURE'S GUINEA FOR SAFEHAVENS. TO BALANCE THESE UNFAVORABLE FACTORS IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO HAVE MET PAIGC POLITICAL LEADERS AT VARIOUS LOCAL OCCASIONS HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THEIR OPENNESS AND WITH THE MODERATION OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. AND EVEN PORTUGAL. RECOGNITION OF INSURGENCY COULD PROVIDE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE KIND OF CONTACTS WITH PAIGC LEADERS THAT WOULD ENABLE US TO COLLECT MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THIS AS WELL AS ON THE EXTENT OF THEIR CONTROL IN GUINEA BISSAU AND THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS.

8. IF THE PAIGC SHOULD DISINTEGRATE OR FAIL TO ACHIEVE ITS GOAL OF LIBERATION FROM PORTUGUESE RULE, WE COULD MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY BY RECOGNIZING THE CHANGE IN OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS AND WITHDRAWING RECOGNITION OF INSURGENCY. A MORE LIKELY POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE PAIGC WILL CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE, MAKE INCREMENTAL GAINS, OR EVEN SUCCEED IN NEGOTIATING INDEPENDENCE WITH THE PORTUGUESE, IN WHICH CASE THE U.S. POSITION COULD BE EXPECTED TO DETERIORATE IF WE HAVE MADE NO RESPONSE TO PAIGC SUCCESSES.

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